



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Jacksonville District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers vigilant at Herbert Hoover Dike as storm approaches

Jacksonville, Fla. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, is tracking the progress of Tropical Storm Ernesto as it approaches Florida. “We have a watchful eye on Lake Okeechobee and Herbert Hoover Dike – actually, many watchful eyes – and we are ready for whatever Ernesto brings our way,” said Col. Paul L. Grosskruger, district commander.

The Corps has a staff of approximately 25 located at the Clewiston office, which is on the banks of Lake Okeechobee. Their daily job involves the regular inspection, maintenance and repair of Herbert Hoover Dike, the 140-mile long earthen levee that encircles Lake Okeechobee. Prior to anticipated storm events, the team inspects the dike, readies and prepositions repair materials, and makes gate adjustments at the locks across the waterway. Another 60 team members and contractors are on call, to provide additional support when needed.

“We are watching Ernesto very closely, and although it appears that the storm has changed direction and is now tracking to the west of Lake

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Okeechobee rather than the east, we do not anticipate any difference in the amount of precipitation or in how the lake and dike will handle the rainfall,” said Grosskruger.

With today’s water level on Lake Okeechobee at 12.14’ NGVD, almost four feet lower than it was at this time last year and three feet lower than the lowest ground elevation around the lake, water managers have determined that the anticipated rainfall from Ernesto poses no threat to Herbert Hoover Dike.

“Managing Lake Okeechobee and Herbert Hoover Dike is a daily job for us, but nothing about it is routine. We are ever vigilant,” said Grosskruger.

“Should we face another storm close on the heels of Ernesto, we will evaluate the situation at that point in time and we are postured to make decisions to release water from the lake if necessary. Protection of the communities around Lake Okeechobee is our number one priority.”

Grosskruger added that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is ready, as always, to provide support during emergency response and recovery efforts following Ernesto, as needed. “The men and women of the Corps are public servants, first and foremost. We are ready, willing and able to respond to the needs of the nation and the state of Florida.”

For further information about Lake Okeechobee and Herbert Hoover Dike, please visit the Jacksonville District web site at www.saj.usace.army.mil or call the Corporate Communication Office at 904-232-2236.

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